

### AT EASE ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Skaters are coming from all over to compete in the Thrash and Jam.

### **PUTTING THE HEX ON HOAXES**

Every year, the Coast Guard loses time, resources to hoax calls. But help is here.

Soundings photo by Harry Gerwien

### **DEFENDING AMERICA**

The Pentagon blew it again. They should have seen the need for armored humvees.

### **MILITARY UPDATE**

The Department of Defense won't back a new limit on ex-spouse retirement shares.

NAVY • MARINES • ARMY • AIR FORCE • COAST GUARD

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# Battling the bulge

## Oceana program may become the national model in the fight against obesity

BY DEVON HUBBARD SORLIE Soundings Staff

Sailors and Marines on deployment are putting their lives in harm's way as they fight the global war on terrorism. But far too many sailors and Marines here at home are in just as much danger. While their brethren are fighting Iraqi insurgents, those at home are fighting a silent killer — the battle of the bulge.

Obesity. It's considered a national epidemic with nearly 65 percent of all Americans considered to be overweight or obese. In fact, physical inactivity and poor diet are now the leading contributors to death in the United States, surpassing the use of tobacco. Obesity is affecting recruits joining the Navy and how

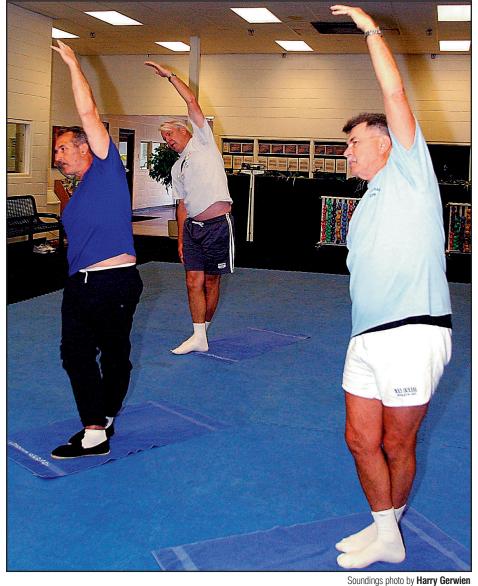
long they stay in the service.

Of the recruits who exceed the height-toweight standards when they join the Navy and Marine Corps, 80 percent never finish their first term of enlistment, which affects training and preparedness within the military.

Approximately 42 percent of all medical separations of sailors are due to a musculoskeletal disorder (usually knee or back injuries) that costs both the Navy and the taxpayers millions in disability and training costs. Many of those come from the service members being overweight.

After the Department of the Defense's 2002 health survey revealed just how fat service members had become, Navy officials decided it was time to shake things up.

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Keeping fit is more than just cardiovascular exercise. Strength and flexibility programs promote strong bones and better balance. The Oceana/Dam Neck IN MOTION campaign includes active duty, family and retirees like Bob Pullinger, left, Bob Denney, and Jim Serpente, right, who get together several times a week to practice Pilates, a core strength training exercise, at the NAS Oceana recreation complex

### Patrol coastal crewmembers remember fallen sailors

BY DEVON HUBBARD SORLIE Soundings Staff

For most of us, the names of two sailors and a Coast Guardsman from USS Firebolt who were killed last month while preparing to board a boat off the coast of Iraq have been replaced by dozens of other Marines and soldiers who have died in recent days.

But for crewmembers aboard USS Typhoon and USS Sirocco, a pair of patrol coastal ships based out of Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, the names of Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Petty Officer Michael Pernaselli, Signalman 2nd Class Petty Officer Christopher Watts and Coast Guard Controlman 3rd Class Nathan Bruckenthal remain sharp in their minds.

The Typhoon and Sirocco are replacing USS Chinook and USS Firebolt, two other Navy PCs based out of Little Creek that have been stationed in Iraq for 18 months. Crews on the ships will be swapped out every six months for the Navy, and every three months for the eight-man Coast Guard detachment.

Typhoon and Sirocco crewmembers will be doing the same mission as those on USS Firebolt and Chinook patrolling the waters, protecting the oil terminals and other ships from attacks, conducting boardings and interdictions when necessary.

"That mission was successful," Lt. Michael Nash, commanding officer of USS Sirocco, said about the Firebolt deaths. "They protected the oil field, which is crucial in the rebuilding of Iraq.'

The three who died saved many others who were working on that oil platform that day, Nash pointed out.

"The loss of life could have been so much greater," he said. Please see PCs, page B7



Family members wave goodbye to crewmembers of the patrol coastal ships USS Typhoon and USS Sirocco. The PCs left April 30 to relieve USS Firebolt and USS Chinook. A boat carrying crewmembers from USS Firebolt was attacked recently, killing two sailors, one Coast Guard member and wounding two sailors.

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#### Fitness from page B1

"Our business is being prepared to fight and win America's wars," said Surgeon General of the Navy Vice Adm. Michael Cowan in a press release announcing the campaign. "We need all sailors and Marines physically fit to support that mission, and we want their families to enjoy the same level of health."

The cure, it appears, is relatively simple. Get moving. Eat more wisely. Exercise more ... a lot more. And the creation of the pilot program Oceana/Dam Neck IN MOTION.

"Our goal is to create and maintain a fit and healthy force. That goal extends beyond the battlefield to the home front," Cowan said. "Encouraging healthy lifestyle choices and avoiding obesity, in particular, are among the most important factors in achieving this goal."

The Oceana/Dam Neck IN MOTION campaign is one of the President's Challenge programs through the President's Council on Physical Fitness. The President's Challenge is a series of programs designed to help improve anyone's activity level. The Oceana/Dam Neck IN MOTION campaign goal is to encourage personnel, including active duty, family members, government employees and retirees to participate in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five or more days per week. The campaign will track the progress and provide educational and motivational resources. Service members interested in taking part in the campaign may join and track their progress by registering for free at the Web site http://www.presidentschallege.org. The Oceana/Dam Neck IN MOTION campaign has a group ID number of 7382 and group name Oceana.

There are two programs to choose from: Active Lifestyle for those just getting started (less than 30 minutes of activity a day, five times a week), and the Presidential Champions for those already active and seeking new challenges. Both programs offer a personal activity log to track a participant's progress online.

The Oceana/Dam Neck IN MOTION offers awards and incentives through the Morale, Welfare and Recreation program. Each completed six-week period qualifies the participant for another award.

Enter Diana Settles, a dynamic brunette with the energy of a controlled tornado. She is the program manager for the Physical Fitness and Injury Prevention at the Navy Environmental Health Center based out of Portsmouth. As marketing manager for the Oceana/Dam Neck IN MOTION campaign, Settles lives and breathes for this project, and her passion is contagious. There's good reason why. The Centers for Disease Control is monitoring the success of the program as a model they may offer nationwide to fight obesity.

Other members of the campaign include Capt. David Hiland, commanding officer for the Navy Environmental Health Center, Capt. Bruce Bohnker, director of Population Health with the NEHC and the project advisor for the campaign, and Capt. Stuart Bailey, executive officer of Naval Air Station Oceana.

Settles can walk the walk as much as she can talk the talk. She gets up early to squeeze in exercise before work. While nutrition and eating properly is important, it isn't the most important aspect to keeping a healthy weight. That's exercise. And that's just not time jogging on the treadmill or

taking the occasional spinning class. It's also gardening, walking around the mall and taking the stairs when possible instead of an elevator.

In her office, Settles flips through reams of reports, studies and papers about the effects of physical inactivity and its relationship to obesity and death. She has dozens of Power Point presentations of varying lengths and charts to sell her campaign to various commands, and writes articles about the program that encourages healthy lifestyles based on good nutrition and exercise.

The most compelling charts are the ones that track obesity rates through the United States. In 1990, only three states had populations with more than 35 percent of its citizens overweight. Every two years, obesity engulfed more states. By 2002, all 50 states had reached obese levels.

But where does it start? With our nation's youths, Settles

"Youths become the least physically active right before they reach the age of joining the Navy," Settles said as she flipped through huge binder to find the appropriate chart. "And yet what is cut out of school's first during budget cuts? Physical activity — the gym. Kids at the age of 5 and 6 already have risk factors for high blood pressure, Type II diabetes and heart disease."

NAS Oceana was chosen for the pilot campaign because it already had several heralded physical fitness programs.

"They had so many gold standard programs, such as the Health Fest, the fitness center and a youth program that encourages physical activity and discourages watching television," Settles explained.

That youth program also works at promoting positive aspects of sports, she added.

"It's not like grade school dodge ball where you kill or be killed, or stand there to become the last one picked for a team, which can ruin someone's incentive to be involved in sports," Settles said. "I'm very impressed with the youth programs they offer here."

While physical fitness is emphasized by military personnel, fewer and fewer are getting in the recommended 20 minutes three times a week. For the Navy, 41 percent of its members fail to exercise that much, according to the 2002 DoD health survey. The Army was the most active, with only 15 percent failing to exercise. The Marines were second at 21 percent who did not exercise.

"In the past decade as we've increased the use of cell phones, e-mails, chat rooms, video games and the Internet, we've become less active," she said. "Technology is killing us."

Studies reveal 30 minutes a day of exercise isn't enough

to maintain weight loss, it takes nearly 60 minutes a day. And those who continue to exercise after losing weight have a 90 percent chance of keeping the weight off compared to only 10 percent who do with just diet alone.

Spending time in the gym, Settles explained, does more than build a buff body. Certain strength building movements mimic motions that are used out in the field. For example, performing squats with a bar on the shoulders develops the muscles needed to carry a wounded soldier off the battlefield. Arm curls can help develop the muscles needed for an aviation machinist mate to do his job.

"If you maintain strong muscles and bones and joints, you can prevent injuries and have better balance," Settles said.

Exercise is important for keeping one's weight under control and strengthening the body, but it also helps to reduce stress.

"When you are doing surveillance in Iraq, you may be sitting there for hours, and you can't miss anything. You need to focus," Settles said. "Exercise becomes a form of stress management so service members can sleep better, which is critical to maintain the human body."

The biggest complaint non-exercisers have is the lack of time. That can be solved, Settles said, simply by changing the way they go about everyday activities. She advises using the stairs instead of the elevator, park further away from the mall, walk to lunch or during lunch, and buy a pedometer in order to track how many steps you take a day with a goal of 10,000 steps. Adm. William Fallon, commanding officer of the U.S. Fleet Forces Command, uses a pedometer himself. He's a strong supporter of the Oceana/Dam Neck IN MOTION campaign, Settles said.

Part of Settles' job is to identify potential problems and collect data about physical readiness from each command. That database will provide comparisons from command to command and even from base to base. She has the ability to compare warfighting squadrons and now even aircraft carriers. Last year the Strike Fighter Squadron 131 "Wildcats" and the Fighter Squadron-11 "Red Rippers" scored 97 and 96 percent on the Navy-wide Physical Readiness Test in the spring of 2003.

"Evidence may drive the train on this," Settles pointed out. "The data may reveal one of this base's brother squadrons is doing better, and these guys can be very competitive."

The Marines, considered some of the fittest in the Armed Forces, showed why to Settles one afternoon. As so many others were driving through Oceana, she watched a group of Marines shoveling mulch.

"Those guys are a role model for physical fitness," Settles pointed out. "They've just got to be out doing something."



